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ABSTRACT

A collaboration called PACE (Professional Alliance for Collaborative Education) was formally initiated between the DePauw University (Indiana) department of education and the Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township (MSDLT), located in suburban Indianapolis. The purposes of PACE are: (1) to improve the training of preservice teachers; (2) to provide staff development for experienced and inexperienced public school teachers; (3) to provide faculty development for DePauw University professors working with prospective teachers; and (4) to create a new professional role for experienced, exemplary public school teachers by involving them more directly in teacher education. The collaborative was intentionally initiated by the executives of both the university and the school district, and a plan was drafted by a representative committee. The formalizing stage produced three springboards which defined the relationship between the university and the school district: the PACE document, a memorandum of understanding, and the recommendations of the collaboration teams. The third stage focused on specific initiatives: (1) a number of Lawrence Township minority students would attend DePauw's Summer Options program; (2) several MSDLT faculty would be invited to the summer fine arts institute; (3) MSDLT teachers would provide inservice training for student teachers; and (4) a DePauw department of education faculty member would conduct training on multicultural education for MSDLT. Graphical representations are included of the 3-stage process. (IAH)

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FROM COOPERATION TO COLLABORATION: THE MAKING OF A UNIVERSITY-SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP

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Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to present a case study of a collaboration called PACE (Professional Alliance for Collaborative Education) between a university Department of Education and a school district. A three stage process of forming, formalizing, and focusing is described. The emphasis is on the responsibilities assumed, the specific features of the partnership and the structural variables affecting the creation of a collaboration.

FROM COOPERATION TO COLLABORATION: THE MAKING OF A UNIVERSITY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

The notion that improvements in schooling and teacher preparation are linked underscores the importance of collaboration between a university teacher education program and one or more elementary or secondary schools. Beyond the general intent of stimulating professional development for practicing teachers at K-12 levels and college professors, there is no single prescribed model.

The purpose of this essay is to define three initiating phases of a collaborative relationship and explain them in light of our experience. Our intent is to unpack the concepts of "forming, formalizing, and focusing" as a contribution to the literature on school-university partnerships.

The education reform movement of the 1980s spurred increased attention to partnerships linking schools and college of education because stakeholders in education recognized that "schools must be different, teachers must be different, and colleges of education must be different" to fulfill the mandate of a better educated citizenry (10: 255). The Holmes Group provided a less than explicit rationale for the creation and sustence of school partnerships: "The improvement and professionalization of teaching depend ultimately on providing teachers with opportunities to contribute to the development of knowledge in their profession . .. [and] the improvement of teacher education depends on the continuing development of systematic knowledge and reflective

practice" (5:66). Surveys recently conducted by the Foundation for Independent Higher Education, the National Institute of Independent Colleges and Universities and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities confirmed that more than one-third of private schools and 20% of state colleges actively engaged in some form of school-college collaboration (9).

Forming (Stage 1)

The decision to forge a formal collaboration between DePauw University, a private liberal arts college of 2000 in west-central Indiana and the Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township (MSDLT), a district of 11,106 students in suburban Indianapolis 60 miles away, resulted from a number of factors. Both parties were not strangers to each other. The MSDLT provided opportunities for education majors at DePauw to student teach and had hired several graduates. DePauw Education faculty visited several of the district's notable schools while DePauw alumni living in the school district actively supported MSDLT programs. Our situation was akin to that described by David Carter, president of Eastern Connecticut University, who assessed relations between his institution and a local school district: "It's as if we've been living together but the marriage has never been consummated. And I think the time has come to consummate the marriage" (11:476).

In our case, consummation was intentional and not accidental (see Figure 1). Forming a collaboration became a

PLACE FIGURE 1 HERE

a decision actively promoted by the executives of both institutions. Robert G. Bottoms, president of DePauw since 1986, initiated and funded a faculty workshop for the Education Department in the summer of 1990. His mandate was clear: Structure ways that DePauw could contribute to improved professional teaching practice in an era of exploding technology and plummeting test scores of K-12 students.

President Bottoms' initiative was matched by the determination of MSDLT Superintendent Percy Clark, Jr. to lead his district to further renewal despite its accomplishments: Five Lawrence Township schools have received the National Excellence in Education Award from the United States Department of Education; more than 80% of the district's teachers hold advanced degrees; and MSDLT high schoolers consistently score above the national average on the SAT. Clark assessed the strength of his school system as a "lighthouse" district of distinction in Indiana: "I am extremely proud to be associated with a community that values education and supports our schools. . . . I know that this community is depending on all of us . . . to do what is best for children. . . ." (8:2). The vigor and spirit of both school leaders helped propel a casual relationship into something more.

PACE: Formalizing (Stage 2)

Personnel from DePauw and MSDLT cleared the path to a more formal collaboration marked by President Bottoms and Superintendent Clark over a 10 month period (April, 1990-January,

1991). Representatives from both institutions met on five occasions; the authors of this essay were assigned the responsibility of developing a proposal for scrutiny and discussion. By December, 1990, P.A.C.E. (3), a "Professional Alliance for Collaborative Education," was unveiled. This plan created a formal collaboration based on mutual exchange and benefit and included these purposes:

1. To improve the training of pre-service teachers
2. To provide staff development for experienced and inexperienced public school teachers
3. To provide faculty development for DePauw professors working with prospective teachers
4. To create a new professional role for experienced, exemplary public school teachers by involving them more directly in teacher education.

The P.A.C.E. document also outlined a number of specific initiatives that would further connect both parties, ranging from field placements for DePauw education majors in MSDLT, the co-sponsorship of grant proposals, to a commitment to foster the value of cultural diversity through staff development endeavors.

We designed P.A.C.E. not only to improve teaching and teacher education but to claim diverse constitutencies as stakeholders in our relationship. We included a DePauw alumnus in

the planning sessions that crafted our proposal because we envisioned DePauw alumni who resided in the MSDLT as resource mentors to provide encouragement and career counseling to a sector of middle school students without post-high school plans. We built into our document an avowed purpose to provide academic enrichment services to minority students and those from low-income background because Lawrence Township is home to families with widely diverse social, cultural, and economic needs and because DePauw students needed experience in schools which valued cultural diversity.

DePauw and Lawrence Township formalized P.A.C.E. in a brief "Memorandum of Understanding" (2) signed by the Superintendent and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. This document confirmed agreement on the specifics outlined in the P.A.C.E. document.

Both parties then decided to unveil P.A.C.E. and its companion memorandum to a wider audience in late January, 1991, when 25 representatives from both institutions attended a "collaboration meeting." After President Bottoms and Superintendent Clark addressed the group, participants were assigned to one of four focused teams: Admissions, Field Experiences/Student Teaching, Community Partners and Curriculum Resources. Team members included several Lawrence Township assistant superintendents, teachers, a guidance counselor, DePauw alumni, and a school board member. DePauw personnel came from the Education Department, the Academic Vice-President, the Dean of

Academic Affairs, the Director of Minority Affairs and the Assistant Director of Admissions. These teams proposed specific linkages and suggested 40 collaborative activities ranging from the initiation of a joint Education Research Program to affiliated professional development efforts (See Figure 2).

Place Figure 2 Here

The formalizing stage of our collaboration encompassed 10 months and produced three springboards which defined our relationship: the P.A.C.E. document, which served as the framework for our relationship; the "Memorandum of Understanding" that sealed our commitment to mutual reciprocity; and the recommendations of the collaboration teams. This stage also broadened the list of participants. The MSDLT school board adopted a resolution in support of P.A.C.E. while all DePauw alumni in Lawrence Township received information about our efforts. Both DePauw and the MSDLT sought and gained media coverage at this stage, since the ties that bound us were now defined and delineated.

Focusing: (Stage 3)

We were now able to focus on specific initiatives: (1) a number of Lawrence Township minority students would attend DePauw's Summer Options program; (2) several MSDLT faculty would be invited to the Summer Fine Arts Institute; (3) MSDLT teachers would provide inservice training for student teachers; (4) a Department of Education faculty member would conduct training sessions on multicultural education for the school district.

FROM COOPERATION TO

The initiation of focused activities required both parties to position collaboration among other ongoing projects. For example, the Education Department had to infuse its relationship with the MSDLT into its departmental agenda without dislodging other programmatic concerns such as planned curriculum revision and NCATE preparation. Lawrence Township had to place its formalized relationship with DePauw amidst its plans to manage a burgeoning student enrollment and pressing state instructional mandates. The need to maintain collaborative activities among other mandates presented a continual challenge. However, the formalizing activities discussed above helped embed the relationship in such a way that collaboration enhanced rather than competed with other institutional matters.

Conclusion

Although this essay is not a template for a single conception of initiating a collaboration, we can offer several assessments of our efforts, tested in the crucible of experience, that might prove helpful. First, a year and a half of forming and formalizing (Stages I and 2) convinces us that a professional relationship is, in the words of the Holmes Group, both a "design process" and a "negotiation process" (6:85). Indeed, we understand that the "stuff" of a relationship involving a school district and a university is comprised of "small tries, concrete problems, shared values, [and] high ambitions" (6: 85).

As a case study of a planning experience, the evolution

of P.A.C.E. constitutes a developmental cycle with certain definable activities, players, and timelines (see Figure 3). No

Place Figure 3 Here

stage was unaffected by the others. Indeed, each stage demanded cultivation before another could be initiated. Only after DePauw and the MSDLT formed a relationship in the first place could a more formalized approach be constructed. Only after binding documents like the P.A.C.E. proposal and an accompanying Memoradum of Understanding were agreed upon could both parties focus on specific activities. Collaboration for us, then, became the forming, formalizing, and focusing of a relationship.

Furthermore, each stage will need continual refinement. Each will regenerate itself if both parties continue to recognize that a collaboration is constructed as a "site-built, intensely local affair. It [can't] be engineered from without " (6:95). Each phase will need the continual support of institutional executives. In effect, the stages of our relationship must continue to be propelled by a "back-and-forth dialogue between people in a university and people in a school district; and between principles and action" (6: 85).

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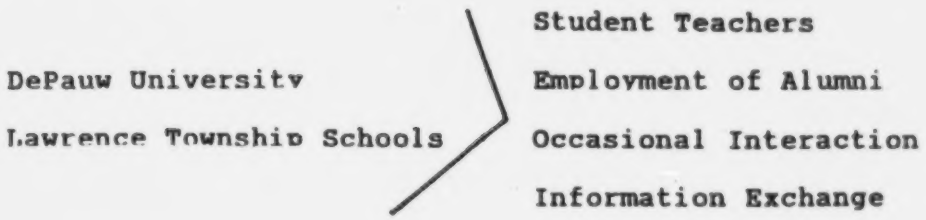
Figure 1

FORMING (Stage 1)

A TYPICAL RELATIONSHIP



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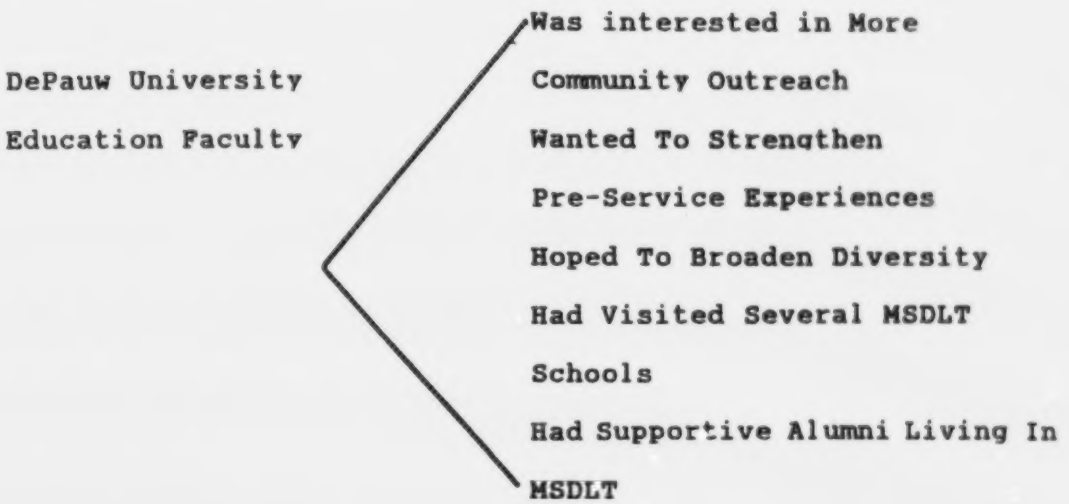

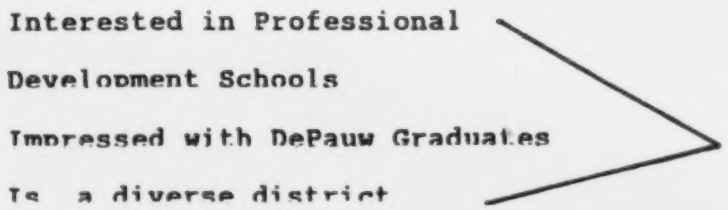

Figure 2

FORMALIZING (Stage 2)

Collaboration Teams Meet to Validate Purpose of P.A.C.E. and Publicize Relationship

DePauw	Lawrence Township
President	Superintendent
Education Faculty	3 Assistant
Academic Vice-President	Superintendents
Dean of Academic Affairs	Guidance Counselor
Director of Minority Affairs	Selected Teachers
Assistant Director of	DePauw Alumnus
Admissions	Board of Education Member

University Public Relations Officer

MSDLT Public Relations Coordinator

Greencastle Media

Indianapolis Media

Figure 3

Defining a University-School District Collaboration

Stage	Principal Activities	Personnel
Forming	Student Teachers	Education Faculty
	Employment of Graduates	MSDLT central office administrators
	Information Exchange	
Formalizing	P.A.C.E. Document	Education Faculty
	Memorandum of Understanding	College officials
	Collaboration Teams	MSDLT central office administrators
	Board of Education approval	DePauw alumni
Focusing	Staff development workshops	Education Faculty
	Winter Term Internships	Vice-President for Academic Affairs
	Summer Options Program	MSDLT Assistant Superintendentfor Curriculum & Instruction

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